

**LIBRARY 21 COMMITTEE**  
**23<sup>rd</sup> Meeting**  
**June 10, 1998**

**Joseph G. Sakey Lecture Hall**  
**Main Library**  
**449 Broadway**

Members in attendance:

Nancy Woods, Co-Chair

William Barry

Ruth Butler

Karen Carmean

Ed DeAngelo

John Gintell

Karen Kosko

Andre Mayer

David Szlag

Charles Sullivan

Emily West

Robert Winters

Susan Flannery

Co-chair Nancy Woods called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M. Co-Chair Woods introduced her Co-chair, Deputy City Manager, Richard Rossi and turned the meeting over to him. Mr. Rossi spoke briefly about the process for today's meeting and welcomed the consulting team from Sasaki Associates. He also described the anticipated next steps in the process of library site selection. Following the meeting and by the end of the following week, 19 June, a final report will be delivered to the City Manager. It is anticipated that the City Manager will then seek to schedule a meeting

with the City Council at which Sasaki will present their findings and recommendations. It is anticipated that the report and its recommendations will provide the basis for ongoing discussions, as appropriate, in the context of which sites are under final consideration with land owners and other interest groups. At a yet to be determined time the City Manager will make a site recommendation to the City Council for consideration.

Co-chair Rossi then turned the meeting over to Ricardo Dumont of Sasaki Associates who reviewed the process for the three public meetings of March 24, April 30, and June 10, 1998.

Mr. Dumont noted that at tonight's public meeting, analyses of the six finalist sites, including the 449 Broadway site, will be presented and the pros and cons for each site reviewed

Mr. Dumont previewed the meeting agenda as follows:

- Review of Process  
Reduction of List of Six Sites
- Presentation of Six Sites
- Recommendations

He then discussed the meeting protocol, asking that Sasaki be able to present the criteria and site analysis without interruption. During the break period everyone will be able to see the boards up close, and then gather together again for an interactive discussion period until the meeting adjourns. Mr. Dumont turned the meeting over to David Hirzel.

David Hirzel began with an overview of the process to date. He noted that extensive studies conducted by the Cambridge Public Library and the City of Cambridge have determined the total space requirement is in the 90,000 to 100,000 square foot range. The site selection study is based upon this space requirement.

The objective of the assignment is to identify a list of approximately 5 recommended sites, including the existing site, and to prepare an evaluation of the suitability of each for the Cambridge main library. This is to be given to the City Manager for his consideration. It is assumed that upon review, the City Manager will forward his recommendation to the City Council for consideration.

Sasaki, the Library 21 Committee, and the City Manager's office designed a public process for consideration of alternative sites. The process was built around a series of three public meetings. At the first public meeting the program and design criteria for a library, urban design goals and characteristics for Cambridge, footprint comparisons, and potential districts within the city were discussed. A long list of 32 potential sites located within seven districts was developed. At a second public meeting a list of 18 preliminary sites in five districts of the City was discussed and a short list of 11 sites established.

At this third meeting, the final list of six sites will be presented along with recommendations for which of these should have first consideration.

Mr. Hirzel reviewed the six "critical success factors" that were discussed at the previous public meeting and were used to arrive at the 11 short listed sites located in 5 districts. These goals gained the consensus of the City, the Library 21 Committee, and the public.

**Civic Heart.** This is a high priority factor described by the Library 21 Committee. "Civic Heart" speaks to the importance that an investment by the City in a new main library reinforces or creates a library that by virtue of its design quality and location is perceived as a facility of great civic importance and that it is open, welcoming and accessible to all of Cambridge. As a part of this topic it was determined that consideration of specific sites should be conducted in parallel with consideration of the Districts within which a main library could be located.

**Library Program Suitability.** Candidate sites must be dimensioned in a way that permits accommodation of a 90,000 to 100,000 square foot program in a desirable "configuration." Width, depth, street frontage, service access and availability of natural light were part of this consideration.

**Parcel Size.** Given a strong preference for accommodating the library on no more than three floors, a site of 35,000 square feet or more is preferable.

**Accessibility.** Preferred sites should be within five minutes or 1,200 feet of MBTA Red Line stops and/or be served by bus routes.

**Centrality.** Preferred library sites should be central to concentrations of population and card holders. This factor also speaks to a preference for sites in identifiable locations.

**Availability.** The goal of the selection process was to identify the best sites for a main library, regardless of current ownership. Although eminent domain can be employed by the City to acquire property for the library, the screening of candidate sites did consider issues such as historic and/or preservation status, nature of current use, expressions of potential and desire for redevelopment from civic and business associations, and attitudes expressed by land owners.

Next, Mr. Hirzel made four observations about what the team had learned to date regarding the selection process.

1. He noted the balance in the comments received from advocates for the various sites. The fact that each of the advocate groups feels there is a bias against it is interpreted as a sign that the goal of equal treatment of the alternatives is being achieved.

2. Any of the 11 sites could accommodate a library. It is necessary, therefore, to articulate their essential differences and to focus on the sites that offer particularly outstanding opportunities.
3. Each of the 11 short listed sites has "issues" that will require attention if that site is selected. The challenge is to identify the relative advantages and to focus attention on those sites offering the greatest potential for meeting the very high standards appropriate to the new main library for Cambridge.
4. The existing library and site set a very high standard that should be met by a new library, wherever it is sited. This Richardsonian "library in the park" is distinctive and is emblematic of the American image of a library.

Mr. Hirzel described the process of reduction from the list of 11 sites to a final list of 6 sites. He described parallel paths of consideration of the quality of each site and of consideration of the districts and their suitability as a home for the main library.

He noted that this step in the process did not numerically score the options. He provided an analogy of university admissions where the admissions committee is presented with a list of candidates with high class standing, great SATs, and strong recommendations. At that point the committee looks at the relative advantages of each candidate, and makes a selection based upon factors for which it is difficult, if not impossible, to give a numerical score.

Mr. Hirzel described the site specific rationale for reduction from 11 sites to the list of 6 final sites.

### **Porter Square.**

The best site available in Porter Square is the Sears building, known as the Porter Exchange. While the building could accommodate a main library, the architecture of the building (which must be protected) does not project a "distinguished work of architecture" image desirable for a main library, and the site is not central to Cambridge population (it is on the Somerville line). Porter Square and the Porter Exchange building were eliminated from the final list.

### **Kendall Square.**

Kendall Square represented what was characterized as a "pioneer" site. Over the long-term it is anticipated that this area will become significantly more pedestrian friendly and well developed. However, it is also likely that given real estate values and existing patterns of development in that area, a well developed Kendall Square will have a concentration of commercial uses. Residential buildings will be market rate and upscale, as opposed to the current image typical of a "Cambridge neighborhood." While land owners in this district have discussed attractive offers to make land available for a new

main library, when weighed against more optimal locations, including the existing library site or Central Square, Kendall Square does not make the final list.

### **Charles River.**

The best Charles River site discussed was Mahoney's Nursery. Although very prominent and visible along the Charles River, the considerable difficulty for MBTA access (over 10 minutes walk), the identity of the location with Harvard University rather than the Cambridge community, and a relative lack of centrality to neighborhoods, eliminated this site from the final list.

### **Central Square.**

Mr. Hirzel noted that at this point in the process of short listing the sites, Mid Cambridge, the site of the existing Broadway site and Central Square are the remaining Districts which are candidates for the location of the expanded main library. He noted the coincidence that this choice agrees with the quotes from the book about the history of the Carnegie Libraries that was read at the first public meeting. It described the debate in the 1800's between those who wanted the library "in the park" and related to the neighborhoods and churches (to keep young men away from the temptation of abutting saloons) and those who wanted the library in the civic heart of the town as a "postcard image" or advertisement of civic success (to attract new business to the town).

Speaking first about Central Square, he noted that the Central Sq. Business Association strongly advocates the Square as a desirable location to reinforce the square as a center for civic life in the city and to add to the mixture of uses attracting citizens and visitors to the Square

He also noted some of the deficiencies of the Central Square sites such as street noise and the lack of exterior children's play space as is now available at the Broadway site. In addition, the focus on specific Central Square sites for the library has resulted in strident opposition to the acquisition of individual properties.

In describing the reduction of Central Square sites to five he noted three general types of sites.

#### ***1. Reuse of Existing "Monuments"***

**YMCA.** While offering an attractive potential for a new main library, the time it would take to find and complete a satisfactory relocation plan for the YMCA, the expense of demolishing everything but the facade as would be necessary for rebuilding a functioning library on the site, and the need to relocate residents of 120 single room occupancy (SRO) units, led to the conclusion that the YMCA should not be on the final list for the new library.

*Post Office.* The Post Office is the best option for reuse of existing prominent buildings because of the relative simplicity of reconstruction and the prominence of its site. The Post Office is on the final list.

## **2. Open Space**

**Prospect Street Lot.** The Prospect Street lot remains an option for construction of the new main library. While its address off Mass Avenue is less attractive as the setting for a major civic building, the Prospect Street Lot is on the final list.

## **3. Massachusetts Avenue Sites**

**Gas and Light Block.** The Gas and Light building site proved to be complicated to achieve given the need to integrate three parts. The site includes the preservation of an existing building, the incorporation of the YWCA pool, and the demolition of retail space on Mass Avenue. This complexity also prevents the construction of any on-site underground parking. The Gas and Light site has been eliminated from the final list of Central Square sites.

*Naggar Block.* The site under consideration on the so called Naggar Block includes two Naggar-owned parcels east of the passage way combined with the City owned parking lot at the corner of Norfolk Street and Bishop Allen Drive. The Naggar Block is on the final list of Central Square sites.

*TAD Block.* The TAD site includes the Woolworth building and the area east to Essex Street between Mass Avenue and Bishop Allen Drive. The TAD Block is on the final list of Central Square sites.

*7-Eleven Block.* Among the Central Square sites, the 7-Eleven block, inclusive of the 7-Eleven building, the Fishery building, the Aqua Communications building, and a city owned parking lot, is an excellent location for a main library and is on the final list.

## **Existing Site: 449 Broadway**

Mr. Hirzel noted that although it is a requirement that the existing library site be a finalist for consideration, the Broadway site qualifies as a finalist in its own right. There are solutions to the organization of additional space which preserve the open space and which also have the potential for improving the open space.

At this point in the meeting, Mr. Hirzel described the evaluation process of the six sites which included the original six "critical success factors" plus an additional eight evaluation factors that were used to compare sites and insure their suitability for the main library.

He noted that a review of the six "critical success factors" confirmed the conclusions of the original analysis.

Mr. Hirzel then reviewed the additional focus of the question of availability. He noted that although all of the final six sites had been on the list from the beginning, had been discussed in two public meetings, and had been noted in the press, a letter was sent to the owners of each of the final sites. Written responses were requested. Of the five Central Square sites, responses were received from Naggar and 7-Eleven stating opposition. No response was received from the other three sites.

The additional eight criteria reviewed for the 6 final sites were described as follows:

*Utilities:* No significant premiums would favor one site over another.

*Soils:* No significant premiums would favor one site over another.

*Environmental:* No significant premiums would favor one site over another.

*Regulatory:* A library is a permitted use on all of the final sites. The Broadway site is in the Open Space Zone and will require a special permit from the Zoning Board of Appeal. The Prospect Street Lot site will require an increase in permitted FAR, and the other Central Square sites will require review under the provisions of the Central Square Overlay District.

*Traffic:* The amount of increase in traffic created by the library will not significantly impact any locations.

*Parking:* Each of the final sites can accommodate necessary parking with a combination of structures under or next to the building plus available shared parking within a five minute walk. Mr. Hirzel described the derivation of library parking demand in the 125 to 150 car range, and the related estimate that 75 to 90 ( there are currently 36 spaces on-site) would be a sufficient number of spaces available exclusively for the library. It is assumed that the balance can be shared with abutting and available spaces. He noted the 200 spaces in the school parking garage that can be shared late afternoons, evenings, and weekends, and the 676 publicly accessible spaces within a 5 minute walk of the Central Square sites, again which can be shared during the late afternoons, evenings, and weekends.

*Cost - Acquisition:* The cost of acquisition of the Central Square sites is estimated to range from \$1,000,000 to \$7,000,000. Mr. Hirzel described the methods used to estimate these amounts. Current real estate values were estimated looking both at the amount of existing square footage of space as well as the amount of space that could be built under current zoning. All sites were treated equally for purposes of comparative analysis. The range is the result of different amounts of land and/or building that must be acquired. The Broadway site is owned by the city.

*Cost - Construction:* The cost of construction of the library and associated parking is estimated to range from \$21,000,000 to \$24,800,000. Mr. Hirzel noted that \$150/sq. ft. for renovation, \$200/sq. ft. for new construction, \$225/sq. ft. for new construction at the

existing site, \$20,000 per car for underground parking, and \$12,000 per car for above ground structured parking were used as a basis for comparison of relative costs. The range is the result of different combinations of renovation and new construction, as well as different parking solutions including replacement of existing parking.

Mr. Hirzel then turned the meeting over to Jonathan Austin and Ricardo Dumont who discussed the six finalist sites in detail, including the siting pros and cons for each site as well as estimated construction costs for the sites.

Existing Site: 449 Broadway

The Broadway site is adjacent to the existing main library and high school and consists of the park, parking lot and tennis courts/parking deck, totaling approximately 4 acres.

The library expansion illustrated proposes a 15,000 sq. ft. addition to the west, that expands or replaces the existing 1967 addition, and a 60,000-sq. ft. addition to the east, that extends across the existing parking lot and concrete amphitheater. Both of these additions would be 3 stories, one of which would be partially below grade as is the existing library. A partial fourth story in the east addition may be possible, reducing the amount of space below grade. The additions would be compatible in scale and character with the existing library and would neither be built on nor cast shadows on the park. The parking expansion illustrated proposes a new three-level parking deck, with one level below grade and tennis courts on top. This approach provides 75 spaces for library use with continued access from Broadway and no change in high school capacity or entry.

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tradition of history.</li> <li>• Existing icon building.</li> <li>• "Library in a park."</li> <li>• Open space available for children and provides "tranquillity" for all.</li> <li>• Relationship to high school.</li> <li>• City owns land.</li> <li>• Strong advocacy groups.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complexity of renovation and new construction vs. all new construction.</li> <li>• Visual alteration of park edge.</li> <li>• Strong opposition.</li> <li>• Over five minute walk to T stop.</li> </ul>

**Library Building Cost:**

20,000 square feet, renovation \$150 per square foot = \$3,000,000

80,000 square feet, new construction \$225 per square foot = \$18,000,000

## Parking Cost

For Library Use: 75 cars (underground garage), \$20,000 per car = \$1,500,000

As replacement for existing parking: 80 cars (above ground),

\$12,000 per car = \$960,000

Replace Tennis Courts = \$185,000

**Subtotal = \$23,645,000**

## Relocation Cost

Move Library to different location during construction = \$1,500,000

**TOTAL COST = \$25,145,000**

## 7-Eleven Block

This site is 36,222 square feet and comprises a variety of buildings facing Massachusetts Avenue, including the 7-Eleven and Cantab Lounge (both 1-story high) and the Fishery buildings (2- to 4-stories high). On Green Street, the site has the Aqua Communications building and a small City parking lot (14 spaces). The site has three owners in addition to the City. None of the buildings has significant value to the Central Square Historic Preservation District and all it is assumed would be demolished to accommodate the library.

The library would be a 3-story building (40-45 feet tall) with a main entrance facing northwest, toward City Hall, on the corner of Massachusetts Avenue and Pleasant. There is potential for a secondary meeting room and vehicular entrances on Pleasant and Green Streets. The library could have the most public, retail-like functions facing Massachusetts Avenue, leading to a more contemplative open garden courtyard or enclosed winter garden on an upper level. The library has the potential for 90 underground parking spaces on one level.

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Excellent civic location vis-à-vis City Hall and Post Office.</li><li>• Existing buildings can be removed.</li><li>• Simple footprint.</li><li>• Frontage on three streets, including Mass Avenue.</li><li>• Very little existing parking to be relocated.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Street noise.</li><li>• No exterior children's space.</li><li>• Strong opposition from owners and tenants.</li><li>• Requires relocation of recognizable tenants.</li></ul>

**Library Building Cost:**

100,000 square feet, new construction \$200 per square foot = \$20,000,000

**Parking Cost**

For Library Use: 90 cars (underground garage), \$20,000 per car \$1,800,000

**Subtotal = \$21,800,000**

**Land/Property Purchase**

30,064 Sq. Ft. land; 36,528 Sq. Ft. LaSalle building;  
\$1,939,700 1996 assessment \$3 - \$5,000,000

**TOTAL COST = \$24,800,000 - \$26,800,000**

**TAD Block**

This 45,571-sq. ft. site comprises two large buildings, both facing Massachusetts Avenue and both under the same ownership: the old 3-story Woolworth Building which extends back to Bishop Allen Drive, and the 2-story CPI Building. The CPI Building is considered a valuable contributing building to the Central Square Historic Preservation District, and it is expected to be retained. The Woolworth Building is considered less valuable and is assumed to be demolished.

The library would be a 2- to 3-story building (25-40 feet tall) with the main entrance facing south on Massachusetts Avenue and a potential secondary meeting room entrance and vehicular entry on Bishop Allen Drive or Essex Street. The library could have the most public, retail-like functions facing Massachusetts Avenue, leading to a more contemplative open garden courtyard or enclosed winter garden in the center. Assuming much of the site is rebuilt, the library footprint has the potential for 100 underground parking spaces on one level.

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frontage on Mass Avenue.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Street noise.</li> <li>• No exterior children’s space.</li> <li>• Existing facades probably require retention. Not consistent with library image.</li> <li>• 85,000 sq. ft. of existing LaSalle space is likely to be most expensive acquisition.</li> <li>• Preservation, adjacencies and dimensions limit natural light and complicate footprint.</li> </ul>

**Library Building Cost:**

20,000 sq. ft. new construction \$150 per sq. ft. = \$3,000,000

80,000 sq. ft. new construction \$200 per sq. ft. = \$16,000,000

### **Parking Cost**

For Library Use: 100 cars (underground garage), \$20,000 per car = \$2,000,000

**Subtotal = \$21,000,000**

### **Land/Property Purchase**

45,571 sq. ft. land; 101,901 sq. ft. LaSalle building;

\$5,151,900 1996 assessment \$7 - \$10,000,000

**TOTAL COST = \$28 - \$31,000,000**

### **Naggar Block**

The 48,826 sq. ft. site consists of the existing City parking lot (89 spaces) on Bishop Allen Drive and Norfolk St, and two single-story buildings (Blockbuster and Coquette) facing Massachusetts Avenue, under the same ownership. Neither building is considered a valuable contributing building to the Central Square Historic Preservation District; both would need to be demolished to accommodate the library.

The library would be a 3-story building (40-45 feet tall) with a south-facing main entrance on Massachusetts Avenue, opposite the Dance Complex, and a potential secondary meeting room entrance and vehicular entry on Bishop Allen Drive. The library could have the most public, retail-like functions facing Massachusetts Avenue, leading to a more contemplative open garden courtyard or enclosed winter garden in the center. The building footprint would accommodate 90 cars underground and would require 2 levels: one for library use and one to replace existing metered parking.

<b>Pros</b>	<b>Cons</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Frontage on three streets, including Mass Avenue.</li><li>• Relatively small amount of land and buildings as City owns 70% of site.</li><li>• Simple footprint.</li><li>• Existing buildings can be removed.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Street noise.</li><li>• No exterior children's space.</li><li>• 89 existing City parking spaces must be relocated or rebuilt under building.</li><li>• Less central than other Central Square options.</li><li>• Strong opposition from owners.</li></ul>

### **Library Building Cost:**

100,000 square feet, new construction \$200 per square foot = \$20,000,000

## Parking Cost

For Library Use: 90 cars (underground garage),  
\$20,000 per car = \$1,800,000

As replacement for existing parking: 90 cars  
(underground garage), \$20,000 per car = \$1,800,000

**Subtotal = \$23,600,000**

## Land/Property Purchase

14,381 sq. ft. land; 13,222 SF LaSalle building;  
\$885,300 1996 assessment \$1 - \$2,000,000

**TOTAL COST = \$24,600,000 - \$25,600,000**

## Prospect Street Lot

This 53,300 sq. ft. site is now a 173 car parking lot serving primarily nearby office buildings. The site is one block removed from Massachusetts Avenue at the intersection of Bishop Allen Drive and Prospect Street and is abutted by residential properties. The site, the parking lot on the opposite corner on Bishop Allen Drive, and the offices themselves have the same owner.

The library would be a 3 story building (40-45 feet tall) with a main entrance facing south on the corner of Prospect and Bishop Allen Drive, and the potential for secondary meeting room and vehicular entrances on Bishop Allen Drive. The building could be stepped down to 2 stories on its west and north sides to be more compatible with residential structures, and could have an interior atrium space or an exterior garden. The building footprint would accommodate 80 cars and would require 3 garage levels: one for library use and two to replace existing parking on the site.

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No demolition or relocation</li><li>• Opportunity for free standing building.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Street noise.</li><li>• No exterior children's space.</li><li>• "Non-civic" address.</li><li>• Existing 175 private parking spaces must be relocated or rebuilt underground.</li><li>• Abutting residential uses.</li><li>• Entrance faces north facade of 5-story office building on Bishop Allen Drive.</li></ul>

## Library Building Cost:

100,000 square feet, new construction \$200 per square foot = \$20,000,000

## Parking Cost

For Library Use: 80 cars (underground garage), \$20,000 per car= \$1,600,000

As replacement for existing parking: 160 cars  
(underground garage), \$20,000 per car = \$3,200,000

**Subtotal = \$24,800,000**

## Land/Property Purchase

53,300 sq. ft. land; \$537,700 1996 assessment \$750,000 - \$2,000,000

**TOTAL COST = \$25,550,000 - \$26,800,000**

## Post Office

This 39,350 sq. ft. site is occupied by the existing 56,000 sq. ft. central Post Office. The existing building has a taller, 3 story public lobby and office component facing Massachusetts Avenue and a lower, 2 story sorting component facing Pleasant and Green Streets. The Post Office is considered a valuable contributing building to the Central Square Historic Preservation District. However, it is assumed that the lower building facing Green Street is of less value and could be demolished.

To utilize the Post Office site for the library program and accommodate some on-site parking, the lower rear portion of the building would be demolished and a 4-story addition added, extending out to Green Street. The main entrance would remain on Massachusetts Avenue, with secondary meeting room and vehicular entrances on Green Street. There is the potential for a roof terrace on top of the existing Massachusetts Avenue building overlooking City Hall. The footprint of the addition would accommodate 50 cars (or 100 cars on 2 levels).

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Prominent location</li><li>• Relative simplicity of renovation</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Street noise.</li><li>• No exterior children's space.</li><li>• Siting and building of new facilities required.</li><li>• Requires demolition of rear to accomplish parking.</li><li>• Complexity of transaction with Federal government.</li><li>• Imposing Federal Architecture not consistent with library image.</li></ul>

## Library Building Cost:

20,000 square feet, new construction \$150 per square foot = \$3,000,000

80,000 square feet,  
new construction \$200 per square foot = \$16,000,000

### **Parking Cost**

For Library Use: 100 cars (underground garage) \$20,000 per car= \$2,000,000

Premium for required demolition = \$500,000

***Subtotal = \$21,500,000***

### **Land/Property Purchase**

39,350 SF land; 56,000 SF LaSalle building

\$6,427,000 1996 assessment \$5-\$7,000,000

**TOTAL COST = \$26,500,000 - \$28,500,000**

Following the presentation of the six sites, Mr. Hirzel summarized the final recommendations of Sasaki Assoc. The recommendation is that two districts, the existing Broadway site and Central Square, should be further considered for the location of the main library. Each offers the potential for an excellent main library.

He repeated the conclusion that the analysis has demonstrated that it is possible to accommodate an expanded library on the existing site in a way that would both protect and improve the quality of the open space and park. He noted that while detailed designs have not been completed, the analysis of the potential massing for the required program demonstrates that the additions can be accommodated behind the line of the front facade of the existing historic building.

Mr. Hirzel then recommended that the first priority site within Central Square be the 7-Eleven Block location. The location next to the City Hall as part of a complex of important civic buildings and the ability to replace the existing buildings combine to create the potential for an outstanding solution to a new main library.

He went on to recommend that the four other Central Square sites be considered as a site for the main library only if neither the existing Broadway site nor the 7-Eleven Block are selected. He noted the following with respect to these four sites.

If the Post Office expresses a desire to work with the City to achieve a relocated Post Office, and to transfer ownership of the existing building to the City, the existing Post Office site could, upon further analysis, achieve the goals for a main library.

The Prospect Street Lot is worthy of further consideration if increased development rights can be achieved, a solution can be found for relocation of the existing parking, and issues of abutter impact are resolvable.

The TAD Block could accommodate the main library (in a less desirable configuration) if agreeable terms of purchase could be achieved and designs that are historically appropriate as well as functionally satisfactory can be accomplished.

The Naggar Block is the fourth site that could be considered if neither the Broadway nor the 7-Eleven site is selected. Given the relatively small existing site and building area to be acquired, it is the least expensive of the four "second tier" sites. However, the need to replace existing parking is a premium and strong opposition to acquisition has been expressed .

Following completion of this presentation, a 10 minute break was taken, followed by comments from those attending the public meeting.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

( C = comment, R = response )

C: My top priority for a library is a GOOD library.

C: Were the cost or benefits associated with discontinuing the existing Central Square library taken into account?

R: It is assumed that if we move to Central Square to the 7-Eleven site, that the library location would shut down, so there would be an efficiency cost, but that would be offset by most likely having a small branch, probably in this building.  
(Rick Dumont)

If we build a library in Central Square, there would be a process for the Library Board of Directors in consultation with the City Manager, the City Council would make a determination for the reuse of that site. If they build the main library at the 7-Eleven site, you may not need the Central Square branch, but there are needs for City space and that the building would be reused. One thing that is quite obvious is the Community Learning Center so there would not be a net savings liability to sell that building, it would be reused by the City. (Rich Rossi)

C: I think that the footprint that's shown could work, but I think that there are some opportunities that have been lost, e.g., putting the parking structure facing the residential street on Ellery is maybe not the best use of space, I wonder why open space here, which is beloved as open space and not tree space, could not have parking under it like the Boston Common garage and perhaps site a beautifully detailed, smaller children's library at this end the space in between with the joint pieces and not fill in the area on the west side of the library that's quite nice as an open space right now.

C: I am very much opposed to taking of property and opposed to it for selfish reasons. Two other considerations: 1. Five tenants and their businesses will be effectively eliminated. 2. If Cambridge is interested in diversity, Central Square has always been known for its diversity, you will continue changing dramatically the character of Central Square. They've just eliminated something like 13 retail tenants with the development just down street, and to lose another five is a dramatic change - just leave it there.

C: I'm from the Cambridge School Committee. In 1974 I was on the Superintendent's Study Committee to look at building a new high school. We studied a number of different parts of the City and it was decided that politically the most acceptable answer was to keep it on the present site. What got taken down were the Cambridge Latin buildings which are here, which created this open space and the auditorium. The site is very limited. To solve some of that we added the Field House which has helped somewhat, but it still isn't the kind of suburban high school space that you see in many other cities. The assumption was that the park would stay here - the neighborhood was very active in working with the City about maintaining the neighborhood and that the recent relationship between the neighborhood's needs for open space (which is very limited in this part of the City) and the high school kids' needs for space. We were all teenagers at one point, we know that kids need space. Now this does preserve this big space here, but it does put a "block" to the free movement around the library. Nothing that these gentlemen have said, and they've studied things very carefully and thought of a lot of angles, but nothing that they've said talks about the needs of the high school personnel - kids, students and teachers - with respect to this building. It's making site more densely built up. I don't think it's a wise use of space. Cambridge has always found it easier to build its new buildings on public parks. You only have to look at where urban schools in Cambridge are sited, you only have to see where Cambridge neighborhoods have lost parks, and that Cambridge is one of those that have lost parks to new buildings, with purposes of course, but they've lost parks. This is a very much more densely built up area because of this suggestions. Now, I'm not saying I'm for the 7-Eleven building, I feel for people who are being moved, but I love the present public library, I realize it's not serving modern library needs, and I wish that this could stay a library even if branch library and that library needs and a building serving library needs could be found somewhere else. I have no opinion about where else. All I know is that this more densely built up piece of

land is not good for the neighbors, for the kids, for the high school facility & I really don't think it's a good idea at all, and I'm quite disappointed.

C: I've observed an odd thing, which is that everybody wants the library to be someplace accessible, but not the one place that's most accessible to them. I don't know if that's valid, but I'd love to be across from the library at this point. I live in Porter Square. I'm very concerned that many of the comments, including other spaces, involve no exterior children's space whatsoever. My blood begins to boil when I hear people, my fellow citizens from this part of Cambridge [Mid-Cambridge], talk about their lack of open space. Come up to 02140 sometime and walk in our only park, which is really lively but you can reach your arms to either side. You have a lot of open space down here and it takes only two steps to get there. To get to the Cambridge Common is just two steps. I'm sympathetic to the ideas that this particular piece is getting built up and built up and built up, but it seems to me that the plan, as it is being presented to us, makes economical and quirky use of this space. And that the study here has done more for the use of this location as it is now shown that this is a place that is viable, accessible, useful and used by all parties. It doesn't just serve 02138, etc.

C: I was about to say that the 7-Eleven could be a good location, but upon hearing the gentleman speak, a man who cares about his tenants gets my vote. With regards to putting the library in Central Square & that would completely deaden the commercial activity and space in Central Square and jeopardize our vitality. There was a comparison saying that it's important to have a civic presence for the library and I think it's a good consideration. But if I compare presence to cultural vitality, I think it's more important to have cultural vitality because is the way we think. The civic presence is on the outside and the importance of the library is the book on the inside. I think that this space is not far away from the center. I think it could work very well. The Naggar family have worked for years and have created a unique center on their block. One place you haven't looked at is University Park. There are spaces available within University Park (and there is a bus stop right there) and when people walk into University Park they walk into a new environment towards the library, there would be room for children, it would be peaceful and quiet.

C: I live in West Cambridge and this is a library I come to frequently. I am a strong proponent of the riverfront and mostly because Cambridge has no presence as a City on the riverfront. It's mostly occupied by the University, businesses, and a few very expensive residences. The Mahoney's site, which is very near Harvard, is only a half mile walk from the Central Square T, just as this [site] is a half mile walk. There is some space there, that probably would not require having to tear anything down. There would be some outdoor space and it would give Cambridge a presence on the river. I know that the Harvard real estate people are very aware that we do have a need, and I think that as we approach the year 2000, the millennium, and our vision for the City and ask

Harvard to work with us to consider whether that site would have some reasonable alternative to offer us. We would not be displacing University tenants. We would not be disrupting this building or the high school.

C: I favor the current site.

C: For someone who has lived in the City for many years with children and no car, T access is extremely important and I have found that I can walk to the main library very easily, but I couldn't walk to the library dragging two primary school children and as a result we didn't get here very often. Easy T access, instead of occasional bus route, would have made it a whole lot easier to get to the library. Unfortunately my kids think you buy books instead of borrowing from library and I'm very sad about that. I also am concerned about what School Department thinks about a plan of this type.

C: I think there has to be an expression of very strong support for Central Square. There are many of us who have worked very hard over the last two years in support of a location in this area. We have in our four contiguous neighborhoods, we have many families with children. It would be a center where we would have tremendous access; we have a large number of elementary schools within almost walking distance. We think that the obstacles around the retail are certainly serious considerations

C: I live in Riverside and as a resident of Riverside I probably have a selfish interest in a library in Central Square, although I have to say that I have a great affection for this [Broadway] site, so my vote comes down to where I can get the best library for Cambridge. I have some liking for the Post Office site, although I understand the complexities of dealing with the Federal government. It sort of brings into focus the benefits of looking across the street at the Post Office, because the Post office, while it does have a tremendous civic use right now, that use is accommodated in 3,000 SF and the rest of the site is a factory for processing mail that could take place anywhere and has no civic value at all. I think the building has some visual issues, such as it's a bit stern and it's made of granite, but I think there are great potentials at that site, particularly where there is discussion of the lack of open space, but I think that 30,000 sq. ft. of roof can do quite a bit for open space and children.

C: You need to consider what life would be like during renovation — where are 75 more cars going to park around the high school. You need to be realistic when talking about renovation. I feel that we've been had; I'm very much in support of open space. We conducted a survey to find out what people wanted in the park, they wanted a passive park, no active sports. The man who owns 7-Eleven is not interested in selling. We were offered two options — the main library and 7-Eleven. I want to know what will happen if that option is now lost.

C: I'm baffled why the Prospect Lot gets higher consideration considering the two disadvantages. If I remember the presentation, the disadvantages were that it doesn't provide a civic address and that it has a lot of residential abutters. Anyone living within a block of Mass Ave. needs to be realistic and recognize that they are living in an urban location with the existence of commercial locations nearby and also large civic buildings nearby; so that seems not a reasonable objection. Is the civic address an ornamental function? Is it the City's self image? I think the citizens need a good functional library. And what is known as a civic address is that there's not that much at stake, like putting certain businesses at risk. Central Square's very unique culture and its unique character are at risk from a lot of other effects — the gentrification, as we all know, is changing it. I think Central Square is going to change and that the library [would be] a wonderful addition to the culture of Central Square. The Prospect lot could maybe do that by relocating —what?—parking—with no damage to humans being or culture.

C: I own the pizza parlor in the 7-Eleven block. If you take my building, I'll lose my house, my business, my life. If you take the parking lot, you relocate parking, nothing else.

C: I've been doing business at the Cantab for over 30 years. For very selfish reasons, I don't want library anywhere but here [Broadway site]. I grew up in Cambridge, and went to school in Cambridge, and the library always worked well here.

C: That Parking lot at Prospect and Bishop Allen — have the owners responded or not? Did you get a positive or negative from that?

R: We understand from conversations that the land provides required parking for the real estate that they also own on Mass Ave. They also have planned, as I understand it, other economic uses for that property, so their ambition or their anticipation for that certainly doesn't include its reuse for a public library. I would not interpret their lack of response as ambivalence or lack of attitude for that property.

C: What is the distance between the arts building and the high school and the piece of library that will be built between the existing garage and the library? — [It is 40 feet] With the sun going from east to west, what kind of shadows get cast on that building?

R: We haven't done any studies to say what that would be, but clearly that side of the building would not receive very much light.

C: Which means you have a whole facade there which has kids in it which will clearly have a lot of its light cut off. You also are cutting off the open gathering

space on that side of the building too. You're wrapping that building around the present Field House.

R: Yes, just here.

C: Which means you are cutting off some of the exits from Field House.

R: No. Actually the location of that doesn't block any existing exits.

C: It doesn't block any existing exits, OK. Does it block any kind of safety avenue for a gathering of over 3,000 people to get out of there safely? Something I'm sure Mr. Rossi will consider.

R: Currently the only access to this parking lot that is underneath here and here is from Ellery Street. What we would propose is that the existing school parking would be accessed from Ellery and the library parking be accessed from here, but there will be a way to connect that will be policed and transferred according to demand.

C: So you're saying that new parking for the library which will be in the sub-ground section will be part of the existing parking lot.

R: New parking for the library would most likely be on the above ground levels shown here.

C: OK. The parking that presently exists for the teachers will remain the same and that it will always be accessible during construction?

R: No.

C: OK. If there's not going to be accessible parking during construction, will any of the parking be accessible during reconstruction?

R: We assume that you would take down the existing parking garage and you have to lose that parking for the period of construction. The only parking which would be affected is under the tennis court which is about 80 spaces. There is another 120 under the Field House which would be accessible during construction.

C: And where would the 80-90-100 teachers park their cars in the meantime? Because I'm not sure they've been told this yet.

R: This site has not been selected. This is not an approved plan to build the library on this site. What we're trying to do in this process is determine what sites would be the most appropriate. It's sort of dangerous to go down this road and say that the building's going to sit like this, that it's going to have this and

that. It's a lot fairer to everybody if we raise issues like concerns about what will happen during construction, parking and the points about losing lighting on the school building and emergency exits. These are all good points. I want to make this clear & we do not have a building plan and we really shouldn't be discussing the building plan. We trying to just talk about reasonable sites.

C: We've seen a lot of architectural plans in the past. If the plan is other than what you have up there, I'm concerned about its encroachment on park. So I have to assume that the footprint as you put it up there is a reasonable footprint for what might be expected if this site were chosen. The other thing is that I'm really concerned about the design for this building is the kids in terms of the flow around the building, you really are cutting off access and flow on one side of that building. The other thing is that in terms of a location of a library, people talk about kids using the library. I think the geographic area where a library should be sited should be near people who may need more access for a library.

C: I own a restaurant in Central Square. To survive has been kind of a struggle and we've been through quite a lot. Since the City did the sidewalks, etc., that really has improved our business. It seems for all these years, that you work 70-80 hours per week to make this business get off the ground, and then all of a sudden the City comes in and says "Hey, you guys are out and we don't really care!" I don't know if that is the image of the City that you would like to put out, but it really is not fair to us.

C: I have been going to and supporting this Cambridge park for over 20 years. It took a lot of work and a lot creativity to create this park. In a way, it was a payoff to the neighborhood by the City for accepting and supporting the renovated high school. We have a very territorial feeling about the park and it's the only passive open space in our neighborhood. It also has the major recreational use in the area. Besides a couple of small basketball courts, we only have three tennis courts in this area. The tennis courts and the park on along Broadway were planned and designed as an integral entity; the whole site itself was planned as an entity and, as I said in previous meetings, there was no account made for expansion. That's why it seems strange to shut off the space that high school kids have become accustomed to and use and need. Now we have a plan that comes along that wants to take the tennis courts and putt them up two to three stories in the air. I must say quite boldly that I would oppose any building that adversely affects this park that we value so highly. The way you've designed that building that makes the park the front lawn of the building. I think that one thing very beneficial that has come out of this process over the past few years is that Cambridge really needs library for 21<sup>st</sup> century and that other sites are available in the City and we don't have to give up our own space in order to provide the City with another public facility.

C: I do support use of this site for library, and I would like to address two points. One is problems during construction, for example the parking. I lived through this

when the Mt. Auburn hospital was reconstructing its parking and garage, and there were ways to mitigate that problem in terms of using alternative sites and the use of shuttles and so on. So there are creative ways to deal with a period of construction. The second point that I would like to address, is what is there for the high school kids after the construction. I have taken the time to interview a dozen freshman and sophomores, and they told me that the proximity of the library, after the school is closed, is where not only did they learn to do research, but they learned to be surrounded by books and have easy access to the books for their own pleasure reading. If you go into the library anytime after school, there are always 2-3 dozen kids here, and it just demonstrates the importance of the library as an educational tool for the future generations.

C: It seems to me that the City is being held hostage to a deal that was struck 25 years ago. And, if deal was struck 25 years ago for the new high school, and no provision was in that deal for the fact that the high school would grow, the library would grow, and the needs of the community would change, it is a very bad deal. The tennis courts are not being taken. They're being put slightly further up in the air. Frankly, I don't understand the problem with the view. If you stand now on Broadway what do you have a view of that would be interfered with?

C: I suggest that anyone who thinks that Cambridge will be same when we build on all of open space should look at Cambridge, a changing of our landscape, which is a flip book of open space in Cambridge, which is always disappearing. It has never disappeared for anything but stellar civic reasons, but it's very important for people to have picture of what will be on this site—how big a branch would it be and some activities or value, and how the decision will be made on what will be here?

R: First of all, a decision based on site, there is no decision on what would happen to this site. I would assume that, if the library were to move to another area, we would try to relocate a branch here. 5,000 SF is the standard size for a [Cambridge] branch library, some are a little larger, some a little smaller. I will say, that what will happen will be a process where the main library is built, and if it's not on this location, then the Library Trustees, the City Manager and the City Council would engage in a planning process and discussion about the reuse of this site.

C: Do you know that this will become a branch library?

R: Well, I mean if we site the main library 3 or 4 blocks from here, I doubt if you would have the main library 3 or 4 blocks from the branch. If you site a library in Central Square and eliminate the Central Square branch, then I think it would make a lot of sense to have a branch here. I can't make that decision. That decision would have to be made by the City Manager and the City Council sometime in the future. I don't think that decision has been made. I don't want

to put anyone on the spot here, but I know that decision hasn't been made yet. because there's no determination as yet of where the library will be.

C: I think that this process has really been shorted and we have been publicly promised years ago that there would be branch libraries in the City.

R: There have been no plans or discussions to try and diminish the amount of branch libraries. If the library building goes in a location where you eliminate a branch library, then I would say that the logical thing is that you would recreate a branch library, not of 35,000 sq. ft., with all kinds of community support on this site. That's as far as I would say the discussion has gone.

C: I want to commend Sasaki for work they've done. It strikes those of us I think who've been involved in the process for the past two years or so that this is a much more realistic and energetic discussion of the possibilities for the plan and more realistic than some. That being said, there are just two points that I would like to make. One of them is that this is the neighborhood in Cambridge with the least amount of open space per person and that it is not pure parochialism that makes the neighborhood want to defend the space it currently has. I think the questions raised about the Sasaki program point out how constrained the site is. What they're trying to do is fit too much on one site. The second point I would like to make is that one thing that was underplayed by Sasaki was access. It was striking to me the comment that was made that it is actually the same distance to walk from Central Square to Mahoney's as to the Harvard Square T. I would love to see some of the other site that are being studied, like the Post Office taken more seriously.

C: I wanted to say that it's better to take a little space than to throw people out on the street.

C: I must say that one discussion I thought I would hear a lot of tonight would be about the traffic in Central Square, and about children walking and being endangered, and being in an area that is already heavily trafficked. I'm surprised that anyone in that area would want to bring more traffic into that area. It's bad enough. And I like the children out here on lawn all the time.

C: Just one additional thought with that Central Square area. The new school assignment policy allows people who live within a 1/2 mile to have preference for certain schools within 1/2 mile, and if one looks at the map you would look at the area in Central Square, someone who bought a house would have a preference for 6 different schools that would be within 1/2 of a mile.

C: Rich Rossi comment: The consultants will send their report to the City Manager probably at the beginning of next week. The City Manager has stated his intention to give the report to the City Council and to ask the City Council to schedule receiving a similar presentation to this that all of you have received, and

be able to ask questions about the site and other sites that were evaluated, in order to have more understanding of the work of the consultant. At some point, I would imagine that there would then be a series of public hearings on the matter and then at some point I believe the City Council will be asking the City Manager for his recommendation. The City Manager has indicated that he feels that this is not the appropriate time to do that, given the fact that as we learn more and more about the sites and ask more questions and give the City Council a full opportunity to do the same thing. This will be presented to the City Council by the end of June.

C: We have spent almost two years running through refinements of the program for the library, on which we had little disagreement at the onset. And I don't think it would be amusing that it may take us a little longer to deal with this really big issue that we're now faced with where it goes.

The Sasaki team and Co-chair Nancy Woods thanked everyone for their attention and their comments. Co-Chair Woods asked everyone to sign the attendance sheet, reminding them that comments can be posted to the web page *Comment Book*. Comment sheets were also available in the meeting room for those who wished to leave a written comment that evening.

Co-Chair Woods adjourned the meeting at 9:45 p.m.